

STATE OF CALIFORNIA SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY - RECOMMENDATION

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)

Subregion: EAST **County:** MONO

Applicant: TOWN OF MAMMOTH LAKES

Project Title: MAMMOTH LAKES BASIN INTERAGENCY COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

Application Number: SNC 070305

PROJECT SCOPE

The Town of Mammoth will conduct a collaborative planning effort to analyze multi-modal circulation, transportation, and recreation facilities and capacity in the Mammoth Lakes Basin in Mono County. This 71 square mile network of lakes, streams, and high alpine meadows and vegetation is a regional water source and sensitive watershed that receives over three million visitors annually. The project presents a unique opportunity to plan for resource protection as well as recreation activity in this high country area which is managed by both the Town of Mammoth and the U. S. Forest Service. A two-year project will assess the existing conditions of transportation infrastructure and use and recreation use. This will support identifying and prioritizing projects and implementing these projects to achieve maximum water and air quality by reducing the amount of vehicle miles traveled and therefore air emissions and managing the amount of visitors to sensitive resource areas to better protect these resources.. Specifically project actions will include:

- Hiring transportation and recreation use consultants
- Assessing transportation and circulation routes, modes, infrastructure, capacity, plans and data over two summer seasons, and providing specific recommendations to increase alternative transportation use and decreasing vehicle miles traveled
- Assessing recreation uses, numbers, facilities, data and plans over two summer seasons and providing specific recommendations to protect sensitive resources. This recommendations may include limiting visitation rates and designing and constructing specific access points to manage visitor use.
- Conducting public outreach for gathering input and disseminating information
- Completing a transportation and circulation analysis report
- Completing a recreation analysis report
- Developing a projects and implementation plan which will include environmentally sustainable recreation options, possible enhancement to current recreational uses; transportation, circulation, and related infrastructure options which will maximize the walkability in the basin while minimizing the negative effects to air and water quality from (excessive) vehicular usage

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends funding \$196,000 of the \$250,000 requested for the project. The \$54,000 reduction of funds eliminates mitigation projects from the project scope.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

- U.S. Forest Service
- Mammoth Community Water District
- Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Foundation
- Friends of the Inyo
- Mammoth Mountain Ski Area

PROJECT SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Hire transportation and recreation consultants	August 2008
Assess transportation and circulation routes, modes, infrastructure, capacity, plans and data	August – October 2008 June – October 2009
Assess recreation uses, numbers, facilities, data and plans	August – October 2008 June – October 2009
Conduct 4 public outreach meetings for gathering input and disseminating information	September 2008 – December 2009
Complete and submit six-month progress report to SNC	January 2009
Complete and submit twelve-month progress report to SNC	July 2009
Complete and submit eighteen month progress report to SNC	January 2010
Complete a transportation and circulation analysis report and complete a recreation analysis report	October 2009-February 2010
Develop a plan that prioritizes projects and establishes an implementation plan	February 2010-March 2010
FINAL REPORT/FINAL PAYMENT REQUEST	April 2010

PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Contract management staff salary	\$44,000
Transportation consultant contract (includes assessment team, public outreach, data gathering, analysis, and report preparation)	77,900
Recreation use consultant – contract (includes assessment, public outreach, data gathering, analysis, and report preparation)	74,100
GRAND TOTAL	\$196,000

2. PROJECT SUMMARY: Mammoth Lakes Basin Interagency Collaborative Planning

The Town of Mammoth Lakes is a California general law city on the Eastern side of the Sierra Nevada, a community whose primary sources of economic activity are recreation and tourism. Mammoth Lakes enjoys unique opportunities as the Town is entirely surrounded by the Inyo National Forest - federal lands administered by the United States Forest Service – and is home to the world renowned winter recreation facility of Mammoth Mountain Ski Area and the unparalleled physical beauty of the Eastern Sierra. Mammoth Lakes successfully markets its recreation opportunities in Southern California and around the world, attracting over 3 million visitors annually. The impacts of this visitation are keenly felt in the Mammoth Lakes Basin, a system of tiered high country lakes, streams and year round recreation opportunities contained within the southwest quadrant of the Town's boundary and framed by the compelling drama of the 11,000 ft Mammoth Crest. While serving as a key recreation destination - as well as the town's namesake - the Mammoth Lakes Basin is a critical water source for the Town and the Owens River and the Los Angeles Aqueduct. The Mammoth Lakes Basin represents a unique opportunity for the planning of interpretive systems, resource protection, and recreation activity in the context of a dramatic, high country watershed.

The Town of Mammoth Lakes is defined within the Inyo National Forest by a set of three distinct boundaries: an urban growth boundary (UGB) which limits the physical footprint of the town to a 4.5 sq mile area, a municipal boundary (TOWN BOUNDARY) which is the legal descriptor of the Town's influence for purposes of tax collection, law enforcement, building codes, etc, and a planning area identified in the town's General Plan. While these three boundaries are distinct and operative, they are not consistent with the jurisdictional limits of the two agencies. This is particularly true in the Mammoth Lakes Basin, which resides within the Town Boundary of the Town of Mammoth Lakes. The vast majority of this same territory is public land administered by the United States Forest Service. The two agencies face significant challenges as they seek to collaborate on behalf of water quality, watershed protection, interpretive potential and recreation opportunities in the Mammoth Lakes Basin, territory over which both agencies have degrees of autonomous jurisdictional authority.

This proposal - The Mammoth Lakes Basin Interagency Collaborative Planning effort - seeks to build necessary interagency collaborative capacity for the long term benefit of the Mammoth Lakes Basin by engaging agencies in a collaborative planning effort with specified near term goals and deliverables. The Town of Mammoth Lakes and the United States Forest Service have partnered with Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access (MLTPA), a local non-profit organization, to engage in a three track planning project that will include: 1) an analysis of circulation and transportation in the Mammoth Lakes Basin; 2) the planning of a heritage, wildlife and water use interpretive program along the \$4 million Lake Mary Bike Path currently under construction and day use and camp sites within the Mammoth Lakes Basin; and 3) data collection and analysis of current recreation activity in the Mammoth Lakes Basin to serve as the basis for long term recreation planning. These deliverables will be produced while simultaneously building interagency collaborative capacity, the ultimate deliverable of this proposal, with desired benefits for the water quality and watershed of the Mammoth Lakes Basin, the local economy of Mammoth Lakes, and the ultimate long term benefit of the environment of the Sierra Nevada and the varied and collected interests of the general public.